Congresswoman Kosmas Votes to Keep America Safe, Secure Borders

Bill Includes Kosmas’ Amendment to Increase Emergency Response Preparedness

(Washington, DC) – Wednesday, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24) voted in support of the Department of Homeland Appropriations Act, which will invest in top priority homeland security programs to keep Americans safe. The legislation emphasizes programs that secure our borders, ports and airports, and help train local first responders and emergency personnel.

“We must always maintain strong national security and put the safety of our citizens first,” said Congresswoman Kosmas.   “This bill provides critical funding to train and support Central Florida’s first responders while improving the safety and security of our cities, ports, borders, and air travel.”

The legislation includes a measure offered by Congresswoman Kosmas that will provide first responders with additional resources to keep our communities safe. The provision provides an additional $4 million for the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) program, which helps key first responder agencies in highly-populated jurisdictions, such as Orlando, coordinate in order to develop response plans, conduct training, and acquire personal protective equipment to better respond to emergency situations. Kosmas proposed the measure as an amendment and it was included in the Manager’s Amendment offered by Congressman David Price (D-NC), Chairman of the Appropriations Committee’s Homeland Security Subcommittee.

“It is paramount that we give our first responders the resources they need to effectively coordinate and prepare for any disaster,” said Congresswoman Kosmas. “Increasing funding for the MMRS program will help ensure that high-threat, highly-populated communities, such as the Orlando metropolitan area, will be better prepared to respond when faced with a terrorist attack, epidemic disease outbreak, or natural disaster.”

The bill also boosts our efforts to increase the security along our borders. There are additional investments to combat the violence, drug smuggling and weapons smuggling currently occurring on our Southwest Border. In addition, the bill invests in improving aviation security, port security and transit security. Among the many important programs, these funds will be used to purchase and install the latest explosive detection systems at airports nationwide and develop and deploy systems to screen cargo containers for weapons and nuclear materials.

Click HERE to view Congresswoman Kosmas floor speech in support of her amendment.

The text of her floor speech can be found below:

Thank you, Madame Speaker.

I rise today in support of the 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Act, a bill that will improve the safety and security of our cities, ports, borders, and air travel.

This bill also provides important funding for our first responders on the front lines of emergencies through state and local grants, including the Metropolitan Medical Response System. I would like to thank Chairman Price and Ranking Member Rogers for including my Amendment to increase funding by $4 million for this vital program in the Managers’ Amendment. Increasing funding over FY2009 will help ensure that high-threat, highly-populated communities, such as the Orlando metropolitan area, will be better prepared to respond when faced with a terrorist attack, epidemic disease outbreak, or natural disaster.

The MMRS program assists 124 highly-populated jurisdictions across the country coordinate among law enforcement, fire, EMS, and public health and emergency management agencies in order to develop response plans, conduct training and exercises, and acquire personal protective equipment to better respond to emergency situations. I believe preparedness is the key to mitigating disasters, and this additional funding will ensure that our local emergency responders will be better able to protect our citizens and reduce damage.

Thank you and I yield back.

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